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MISS JERRY

MISS JERRY ::: BY ALEXANDER BLACK

WITH THIRTY-SEVEN ILLUSTRATIONS FROM LIFE PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
NEW YORK MDCCCXCV

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PREFACE

THE text of "Miss Jerry" was not originally designed for print, but for oral delivery in partnership with the series of 250 photographs from life, with which it formed what I have called a "picture play." The original draft of the story was but little longer than the reading version used in public; and although it seemed probable that I might at some time arrange the story for book publication, it was not until the unexpectedly definite success of the picture play brought with it repeated requests to print, that the availability of the existing draft came into consideration at all. It was urged that the colloquial, story-telling cast which I had sought to give to the text, in view of its use in oral delivery before audiences, could not be regarded as disqualifying; but despite this opinion and many kindly comments on the story, as such, from critics and correspondents, it was

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impossible to prepare "Miss Jerry" for publication without certain changes, necessitated by the fact that in the picture play I tell much of the story with the pictures.

And here it may not be out of place to explain that "Miss Jerry" was cast as a play is cast, and the successive scenes photographed phase by phase from the living people. The interiors, excepting only the interior of Mr. Chauncey M. Depew's private office at the Grand Central Station, are fictitious; that is to say, they were devised under the skylight of a studio. In the street scenes I introduced the backgrounds of real life, bringing the fictitious action of the story against the actual lineaments of the city. In some instances the pictures preceded the writing of the text, and in others the text was modified, for the purposes of the picture play, to bring about a more perfect harmony between both than would have been possible had the text been fixed, and the photography a form of illustrating.

The 250 pictures prepared in this way are thrown upon a sheet by the aid of the stereopticon, dissolving one into another at the rate of three or four to the minute, the oral story moving concurrently

with the picture story as the eye thus receives it. In such a plan much of description may be omitted from the reading version, since the pictures to a great extent tell what the characters look like and do, while the monologue concerns itself more especially with what they think and say. The illustrations to this volume represent a selection from the series of pictures, with two scenes—the first talk between Jerry and Pink, and the final scene between Jerry and Hamilton—approximately complete.

In this triangular partnership between the art of fiction, the art of the tableau vivant and the science of photography, I have sought to test certain possibilities of illusion, with this aim always before me, that the illusion should not, because it need not and could not safely, be that of photographs from an acted play, nor that of an artist's illustrations, but the illusion of reality. If it is the function of art to translate nature, it is the privilege of photography to transmit nature. Thus, I have sought to illustrate art with life.

I think that I may be pardoned for expressing in this place my gratitude to those who, in the heat of the hottest of hot summers, underwent

the discomforture of participation in the making of the first picture play. I wish to make grateful acknowledgment to that wittiest of orators and most gracious of wits, Mr. Depew; to Official Weather Forecaster Elias B. Dunn, who since the interview on the top of the Equitable building has been translated to that "higher tower to the south," and to Superintendent Martin of the great bridge. For assistance in casting the story I am indebted to the President of the American Academy of the Dramatic Arts, Mr. Franklin S. Sargent.

ALEXANDER BLACK.

CHARACTERS OF THE STORY:

Geraldine Holbrook, the Princess of Panther Mine.
Mrs. Remsen-Holt, a Young Club Woman.
Gracie DeMond, the Rose of the Rockies.
Olivia Prattsby, a Retired Bud.
Miss Dorothy Walsh, a Social Favorite.
Miss Maud Rutherford, of a very good family.
Mrs. Dyckman, who gives a ball.
The Writer of the Letter.
Kate, a Servant.
Mr. Richard Holbrook, of the Panther Mine.
Mr. Walter Hamilton, of the New York Daily Dynamo.
J. Sylvester Ward, Pres. of the Long Creek Mine Co.
"Pink" Loper, of the Mammoth Museum.
Frederick Prentiss, a New Bear.
Mr. Dyckman, husband of Mrs. Dyckman.
The English Critic.
The Waiter of the Monastery.
Old Prattsby, who still insists upon dancing.

Time: Winter and Spring of 1893–4.

Scene: New York City.

MISS JERRY

I

THE letter that Richard Holbrook had received from Colorado contained some bad news. It was one of those letters which when you read them twice sound worse the second time. The cloud of approaching disaster had fallen upon the Panther Mine. There seemed no longer to be any hope.

When he went into the West with his young wife, after the business crash of '73, Holbrook had no romantic ideas of fortune making. He had expected a hard fight; and he found it. Harder to bear than the stress of those early struggles had been the stroke of death that left the young miner alone with his baby girl.

Geraldine! She was the only girl in the county then. They called her the Princess of Panther Mine.

For her sake he had regretted the rough life at the mines and the cow camps. For her sake, and for the sweet memory of that brave

young wife, he had performed prodigies of labor, and beside the evening lamp he had planned the child's lessons for the following day.

How he had missed Geraldine, and how the camp had missed her, when she went away to the academy!

On returning to New York, after spending fifteen years beyond the Mississippi, he had taken a house in one of those quiet cross streets just north of Washington Square. The elevated railroad rattled across one end of the thoroughfare, and from the opposite direction, in subdued echoes, came the roar of Broadway. But West Tenth Street, almost staidly dull, always had the air of scorning to listen to these vulgar noises.

And now, after five years in New York, Holbrook began to feel the necessity of making some radical changes in his way of living. He flattered himself that he had kept from Geraldine a knowledge of the awkward situation in his New York investments within the past year. Yet it was not possible much longer to conceal from her the distressing truth, and this brought a bitterness that nothing else could have contributed to the crisis. It was hard to confront her with adversity ; as hard, it seemed to him, as if she had been less certain to bear it with cheerfulness.

When she surprised him in his painful reverie he started guiltily, slipped the letter into

his pocket, and muttered some commonplace about being late for the office. But she read the new trouble in his face.

"Father," she said, "why don't you tell me all about everything?"

"Oh, never mind about everything, Jerry. Don't bother your head about me."

And he kissed her and went out.

She saw the Colorado postmark on the envelope that lay upon the table.

"So," she thought, "there is trouble at the mine, too!"

The thought of trouble did not daze her. Her whole training had fostered her self-reliance, strengthened her for emergencies, and at the first signs of distress which her father had shown some months before, she had permitted herself to think again of an early ambition to do something in the world on her own account.

Her father was not an old man by any means, but his health was broken, and if disaster should actually come he could never fight the battle over again. "It is my turn now," she thought. There seemed to be nothing in the way but his pride, and she was confident of overcoming that obstacle.

The thought made her cheerful. "I will go to-day," she was thinking. "I will go and meet the world on a new footing. And it will be better to go before the trouble grows any worse."

It surprised her to find how easily she had persuaded herself to believe that her resolution was entirely rational. If she realized the extent to which she was using the suspicion of ap-

proaching trouble as an excuse for entertaining an ambitious idea, the suggestion did not seem to be disqualifying.

A noise in the hall made the girl turn, and at the door of the library appeared Kate, the maid, her face betraying unmistakable excitement.

"There's a pirate in the hall, Miss Holbrook!"

"A what?"

"A pirate, Miss. Shure he has long hair, an' a great hat, an' all of him is quare. An' it's yourself he is askin' for, Miss; but——"

"Did he give you any name?"

"An' he says, 'tell her Pink,' he says, 'Pink,' an' I didn't howld the rest of it, Miss."

"Pink!" cried Geraldine. "Not Pink Loper?"

"The same, I think, Miss."

Geraldine was about to follow the girl into the hall, when the strange figure of a man appeared at the door—a man of wild appearance, suggesting the second heavy villain in a Western melodrama, who lounged in with a strange mixture of assurance and diffidence in his manner, and who drawled, "I guess this *is* Jerry."

"Yes, it is!" exclaimed the girl. "And is this you, Pink?" she added, extending her hand,

which the man, to the distress of the maid, grasped fervently. With increased astonishment Kate heard the "pirate" say, "Well, I'll

be hanged if I'd knowed yer, Miss Jerry, you've got to be such a woman!"

"But, Pink," demanded Geraldine, scanning Pink's buckskin coat, leather breeches and sombrero, "what on earth are you doing in this rig?"

"Rig?" repeated Pink. "Advertisin' the

show, I guess. Anyhow, I ain't got no other hat that's fit to wear just about now. I'll have t' tell yer about it. But shoot me! I can't git

used t' this bein' you!—can't hardly believe it!"

"And you look so funny, Pink! Worse than Charley Allen used to."

"Yes, I suppose I do. But I'm right in this now. I—I suppose y' heard about my gettin' married to Mary?"

"Yes, soon after I went away."

"An' y' know what kind of a shot Mary was?"

"Yes, indeed. A much better shot than cook."

"Well, somehow she got it inter 'er head to go inter a show, and we got over to Denver and then to Omaha; an' me an' her got up a shootin' act—a regular museum act, y' know—an' Mary's a corker, 'n no mistake! An' I can make a pretty good stagger myself. Of course it's dead easy at four or five yards, but we chuck a

great bluff, an' it goes. Anyhow, we was at Chicago durin' the Fair, an' now we're on the Bowery—down at the Mammoth. I had your address all the time from Parker, an' always intended t' look y' up if I ever come to New York."

"And is this why you let your hair grow so long?"

"Sure! An' this is why I wear this hat; an' this is why I wear this hull business. Great fake, ain't it? It's an ad for the show; but I did feel kinder queer tacklin' your door bell."

"And does your wife wear——"

"Not much! She's got a good fake for the show, but she wouldn't wear nothin' but stylish clothes on the street, an' when she's got 'er war-paint on, Mary's a peach! She's got very high toned lately. She's a remarkable woman." Pink paused for a moment. "Y' know I'm called Mortimer on the bills—Mortimer De Mond —and she's Gracie. Y' know how it goes—the De Monds, Gracie and Mortimer. Maybe y' seen the show, an' didn't think about it bein' us?"

"No," said Geraldine, "I never saw your show."

"Y' oughter; its great! Mary used to be the Pearl o' the Plains, then the Sylph o' the Sierras. Now she's the Rose o' the Rockies. Yes, she's a remarkable woman."

"I wonder if you remember, Pink, that Mary is the first woman I ever remember seeing?"

"Well, y' got over it."

"I was a little mite of a girl who didn't remember her mother, and who had grown big enough to run around on her own account, to watch the round-ups and ride a horse——"

"Yes," interrupted Pink, "I've seen yer ride a broncho like a young buck when yer wasn't bigger'n a minute."

"And I had grown up that way, seeing plenty of men and cattle, but never a woman, until one day in a party coming over the hills to the new camp I saw a being in skirts riding a mule. She was a young woman, dressed in blue calico and wearing a sun-bonnet; and I remember asking father if he thought I would ever grow up to look as pretty as that. Yes," pursued Geraldine, as Pink turned his eyes toward her, "and that was Mary Kimes."

"I wish I'd got out of it as easy as you

did," said Pink, staring absently before him.

Geraldine dared to laugh at him. "Why, Pink, you don't seem to be happy about Mary."

"Well, I ain't altogether," returned Pink, "that's a fact. She's too remarkable a woman for me. An' I can tell yer, Jerry, if I ever was bereaved, an' got a good, square chance to marry again, yer can gamble on it, I wouldn't take up next time with a dead shot."

"But Pink, you are in no danger of getting

shot, are you?" demanded Jerry, with an ill-concealed twinkle.

"Probably I ain't; but it makes me nervous.

She's a woman that kin git mad quick as lightnin' and y' never kin give 'er any talk."

Jerry said she remembered something about her nearly killing a man for saying that she was the worst cook in Colorado.

"That's it; an' you never know when she might make a thunderin' big fool of 'erself.

How's Mr. Holbrook?" asked Pink, changing the subject; and the two rambled off into reminiscent talk, in which Pink took a grim delight, that expressed itself for the most part in an absorbed attention, and a nervous movement under his straggling mustache.

"Pink!" cried Geraldine, in a burst of stirring recollection, "do you remember the day I fell out of the bucket near the bottom of the shaft, and how you and Miles brought me out? and how the Creeper cried when he thought I was killed? And do you remember the day the English lord came to see the camp and asked who I was, and you said 'that's the Princess of Panther Mine'?"

"Yes, I do; an' I remember the day that Banks was shot, that you got a hole in yer hat for tryin' t' tell Banks that Thorp was gunnin' for 'im."

"I had almost forgotten that."

"Yer come mighty near not bein' able t' remember it. But that wasn't the only close call yer had."

"And of course you remember the day I got into a corner of the corral and climbed up there

to escape the cattle and stood there screaming——"

"Yes, yer did yell."

"And calling for some one to get me down, and all the cattle in the world seeming to be jammed right there ready to trample me to death, and the Boston man dashing for me just in time? And you remember the day of the riot over the Webster gang, how you and Wilkinson, and father, and I were perched above the cutting

when the crowd swept by within a few yards of us, yelling and shooting right and left; and how father fell back with a bullet in his shoulder, while I crouched there beside him crying and holding fast to that miserable little dog? And the winter before, Pink—will you ever forget the great six days' storm and the burying of the camp?"

"I remember that every time I get on a large hunger."

"How white the world was when we caught a glimpse of it! It all comes back—the days of worry, the gloom of the men, father's queer look of distress as he watched me; the discussion as to reaching the other camp, and my getting on the snowshoes and being lifted up to start out on the journey with a long rope fastened about my waist. How delighted and excited I was! You remember the slope there, Pink—just to the north of the camp?"

"Yes; an' you pickin' yer way down like a sparrer."

"I was so light, you see, that I could go where none of you dared venture; and you were all watching as long as you possibly could until I

had scrambled slowly along over the slope and had gone down beyond the low ridge—right over there——"

"Yes, I know, like I was lookin' at it now."

"And then father tugged at the line because he was afraid I had gone through the crust of the snow until I came in sight again screaming to him to let me go; and they gave me more rope, until——"

"Until yer brought back word from the other

camp, the best news that a crowd of men with a lonesome feelin' inside ever got on the face of this earth."

The talk was interrupted by the street door bell, and the appearance of a young woman who came in with the air of a person who is a frequent caller, and who did not disguise her astonishment at the presence of the other visitor.

Pink acknowledged the introduction with his best bow, and said "that he must go now, and that he would come in again."

"I shall be glad to see you, Pink," said Geraldine in parting, "and bring Mrs. Loper with you."

Mrs. Remsen-Holt heard the explanation with an expression of countenance indicating that if she had been surprised she might have known better. "It's just like you, Jerry," she said; "and it's a wonder to me after all that fuzzy Western life of yours, that you haven't been visited by more desperadoes and rough riders of the rocky road."

"It was a real delight to meet Pink again," Geraldine said. "I wouldn't have missed him for anything. And besides, Pink isn't so very wild. His long hair is for revenue only, and

I assure you that he is as good-hearted as his hair is long."

"I just ran in," resumed Mrs. Holt, "to tell you that we are organizing a Municipal Government Club, and that——"

"Another club?"

"Yes, an afternoon club, you know; and we are going to study taxation, and street cleaning, and primaries; and Mr. Roosevelt has promised to speak at the first regular meeting. Everybody is de*lighted*. It will be a *great* success; and it's *never* been done, you know."

"And to think," sighed Jerry, tragically, "that I had hoped so confidently to save you! Mrs. Holt, this is simply debauchery!"

"Jerry! you are *so* amusing."

"All the same, Mrs. Holt, I look upon you as a pitiable victim of the club habit. It's an awful appetite when once it fastens itself upon you. You start in with one or two clubs a week; then you have to take one every day, and after a while two a day is the least you can get along with. If I weren't on my way out now——"

"Jerry! *will* you stop and listen?"

"No, I mus'n't, Mrs. Holt. I've reformed.

I don't think I was born for the frivolous life I have been trying to lead here in New York. I like to frivol, too; it would be lots of fun to study municipal government, but I must get down to something serious."

Mrs. Holt smiled. "The idea of your settling down is really droll, Jerry. I should be very sorry to see you become sedate; and you have seemed a bit serious lately—for you. The Municipal Government Club is just what you need to brighten you up. I never forgot what my first club did for me. You know I was fretful and peevish, and complained so much, that Papa said: 'Fanny, you'll have to either get married or keep a diary.' But I didn't do either. I just joined a club, and it simply *saved* me. Of course when I did get married, clubs became an absolute necessity."

"I suppose so," said Jerry; "but I think I shall worry along with my eight or ten until I have your better excuse. Which way are you going?"

Mrs. Holt was too busy a woman now-a-days to waste words in such a matter. "But I shan't let you bury yourself," she said, as they went out.

A few minutes later Jerry was on an elevated train scurrying in the direction of the City Hall. The plan which had formed itself in her mind had begun to seem like a very daring one. As that plan included an undertaking on her own account, without any advice or assistance, it was one that had a natural fascination for a girl of her training.

As she crossed City Hall Park it occurred to her that people who might hear of it would be inclined to say that it was just like Jerry Holbrook —a thought that both amused her and urged her to hope that it might not turn out awkwardly altogether. It was an entirely creditable thing, she had thought, to determine to enter journalism, and to do so without letter of introduction, or any other influence of the kind. But she had felt much more comfortable going down the Panther Mine in a bucket than going up the Dynamo Building in an elevator; and when she had advanced so far as one of those paradoxical doors that tell you the entrance is somewhere else, she began to feel a little sorry that her scheme had made it absolutely necessary for her to go alone. For a moment she thought of turn-

ing and catching the elevator on its way down; in another she had opened the right door.

The guardian of the right door was one of those boys that bloom in newspaper offices and nowhere else on the surface of the globe; a boy precociously versed in the ways of the world, equally familiar with the tariff and the prize-ring, tingling with the latest impulses of the English language, and terrible in his superhuman self-possession; a boy to admire and to fear; a boy who inspires a liking without affection, yet whom no one likes any less because of an occasional yearning to kick him down stairs.

When Miss Jerry came in the boy asked her, without looking up, whom she wished to see. Of course Jerry didn't know whom she wished to see, and the boy didn't appear to be listening when she explained her errand as awkwardly as people do when challenged to explain anything to a remorseless boy; but he said at last that he guessed she had better see Mr. Hamilton, the City Editor, anyway.

The City Editor was a younger man than Jerry had expected to see. She had met young reporters, but had always fancied an editor as a

man who had grown old enough to be tired of knocking round out-of-doors.

This City Editor was young, but if he had been

eighty-three he could not have waited with more severe repose for Jerry to begin, or have prepared a more judicial countenance while she explained, clumsily and haltingly, that she wanted to be a newspaper writer.

When she anticipated his question and said that she had never written a line for a daily

newspaper in her life, she fancied that she saw a twinkle of amusement in the City Editor's eyes, and the suspicion did not please her at all. When he asked her bluntly what sort of work she thought of doing, she began to wonder whether he was not a brute, young as he was. "I am willing to write about anything," she said, catching again the irritating glimmer of a smile, "I am willing to write about anything but society."

The City Editor looked as if he did not think any less of her for this prejudice. "And I am so tired of reading about women," Jerry added, "that I would rather not write about them in particular;—you know what I mean."

"Oh, yes," said the City Editor, "I know what you mean." And then he undertook to tell her that general newspaper writing required considerable experience, that the rough and tumble of reporting and the preparation of special stories was not exactly the sort of thing that a young girl was usually fitted for.

"But you have women reporters," she urged.

This he admitted, adding that some of them had rather a hard time of it.

"But I am not afraid of anybody," she declared; and the City Editor laughed outright. "Perhaps not in the daytime," he said. "But think of the night. One of our women writers has just been going through the police lodging-houses at two o'clock in the morning. How would you like that?"

"I wouldn't like it," said Jerry quietly, "but I would go if I had to."

At this the City Editor leaned back in his chair again. "You are hard to frighten."

"Oh, *please* don't try to frighten me," Jerry said, "for I am sure I should wear out your patience. I simply *can't* get frightened. I feel quite ashamed of myself."

The City Editor laughed again. "I shan't try any more," he said. Then he attempted to be solemn again, and not to notice how pretty she was, and to remember, and to comment upon the fact, that there was no position open on the staff; but his speech didn't go very well. It ended by his suggesting that she try her hand at some practical form of writing and submit it. "You might write a special story for the Sunday paper."

Perhaps because he regarded the talk as practically at an end, or because he wished to soften the edge of his not altogether symmetrical severity, the City Editor caught up a scrap of paper from his desk and said, lightly, "You will understand, now, that if you were an old hand—and a man—I might have had to send you up to interview this fellow Ward, the mining genius, who is just on from Colorado. But——"

"Colorado!" cried Jerry, "and the mines! Why I grew up in a Colorado mine! I know mines better than—than anything else in the world! I wish you happened to think that I might go to this mining genius. Suppose——"

The City Editor despised his own weakness, but he permitted himself to listen, and to believe that this was not entirely absurd under the circumstances. His firmness was the more shaken when he had permitted himself to ask something about Jerry's Western life. He was seized by an unprofessional curiosity to see what such a girl would make of such a situation, and even persuaded himself that the result might be distinctly interesting. Then he actually set about planning the interview which she was to undertake.

"I don't suppose," she said, "that there is any other way except to go right to the hotel."

"No, I think not," replied Hamilton, search-

ing her face for some sign of dismay at this; "and we must have it for to-morrow morning's paper if he is in town. Ward has made a great hit by the introduction of some new machinery, and if I mistake not, he is on here to arrange some big mining scheme. There is a good story there if you can get him to talk."

"Get him to talk!" The words echoed strangely in Jerry's thoughts as she went down in the elevator and across City Hall Park; and that afternoon when this young woman who was not afraid of anybody asked at the desk of the Fifth Avenue Hotel for Mr. J. Sylvester Ward, her heart was thumping in a disgraceful way.

It so happened, however, that Mr. J. Sylvester Ward was out of town, and Jerry left the corridor glad and sorry that the case stood that way; sorry that there should be some doubt as to getting the interview; glad that she should have a little longer time for preparation.

When she came to think the thing over at home, she could not decide that she really had been rash. If she was to go into journalism she meant to go by the rough road of the ordinary beginner. Going to interview a strange man at a big hotel certainly was a rough piece of road. It was not exactly the sort of thing she would have picked out to begin on, but it was the chance that came to hand, and if the awkwardness arose chiefly from the fact that she was a woman, she resented the awkwardness all the more on that account.

When she asked her father that afternoon if he remembered that this was the night of the Dyckman ball, he looked so distressed for a moment that she was tempted to throw over the whole question of going to the ball; but she knew that it could not be best for him to stay at home. Even if there had to be some changes in their attitude toward social life as they had permitted themselves to know that life, it would be better for him that the break should not come any sooner than the need.

"I see that you want me to go," Holbrook said, looking down at her in the quiet way that had come over him.

"Yes, I want you to go, Dick," she replied, using the name he permitted her to make a whimsical use of. "I'm not going to let you stay around and mope."

"Have I been moping?" he asked, seriously.

"No, Dick; but I don't want you to begin. And I warn you that at the first signs of worry I shall sentence you to the giddiest orgies I can find."

And so father and daughter went to the Dyckman ball that night.

The Dyckmans were not exactly society people, but their entertainments were excellent in quality, being neither lavish nor meagre, of the sort that draw out representatives of both the older and the younger sets, and where, as Perry said, they served suppers at which you could actually get something to eat.

Dyckman himself was a little man with a large, red smile, who had made considerable money in Harlem real estate. He was a thin little man—so thin that, as Perry said, his full-dress suit was only half full. Utterly incapable of the social graces, he delighted in the popularity of his wife, an amiable and ambitious woman of substantial person.

The gathering at the Dyckman's on this occasion was one of those at which everyone meets precisely the people he expects to meet, and at which everyone appears to derive a species of satisfaction from this circumstance. Altogether it was an interesting company. There was a proper representation of the younger set—Barrington and his bride, Eddie Van Cowen, the Sibley girls, who were playfully spoken of as the Westchester twins, and some eminently solid

people from Washington Heights. The Lexington brothers, who had recently fallen heirs to the great Gibraltar apartment houses, were conspicuously present. Perry, who was always saying mean things, applied to them the label of the Gibraltar Flats. There was little Milkworth, a sadly uninteresting type of young man—too young to have a past, too stupid to have a future; and Mrs. Caswell, who had the reputation of being the cruelest of all the rich widows in New York. Three or four men were always certain to be found hovering around Dorothy Walsh, who displayed great precocity in dividing her attention and her conversation into microscopic fragments.

Mrs. Remsen-Holt brought an English critic who was studying American society and politics on a six weeks' trip; who took the Municipal Government Club seriously, and who was always asking whether this, that and the other thing were "characteristic, you know." Mrs. Holt had studied with great labor the English angular handwriting, and she enjoyed keenly the English critic's delightfully angular enunciation.

Then there was old Prattsby, over sixty, but notoriously willing to dance, a frivolity

which his daughter regarded as entirely incongruous in a gentleman of his years. But Miss Prattsby took life very seriously. She had reached an age when it was awkward to remember the introduction of telephones, rash to remember Black Friday, and positively indecent to remember the War. She was a sort of feminine Diogenes who went about with the lamp of higher education, sadly searching for an honest man.

Miss Jerry, who came in a charming ball-gown that once had robed her stately great-grandmother, had been presented to the English critic and was listening to his queries and comments, when Mrs. Dyckman came up with her cousin, Mr. Ward, of Colorado.

Jerry, perhaps, visibly started at the name.

"You are not Mr. J. Sylvester Ward?" she asked in her direct way.

"Oh, yes I am!" replied Ward, with a free laugh, "unless you like James S. Ward better."

"I happened to hear your name mentioned today," said Jerry. If Ward wondered why she flushed he did not lament the effect. "And this," Jerry was thinking, with a confused sensation, "this is the man I was sent to interview!"

"I have just been talking to your father," Ward was saying a few minutes later, "and telling him that I had heard both of him and of

you from the people out there at Long Creek."

Jerry hoped that the reports were not entirely unfavorable.

"On the contrary," returned Ward, "people in that part of the country bank high on your father, and I received the impression that you were a kind of Bret Harte heroine."

Jerry laughed. "That is a very indefinite description. I shouldn't know how to live up to it."

"I'm glad," pursued Ward, "to get over here out of the crowd. The crush of people worries me. Of course you know I haven't done much of this society sort of thing for nearly a dozen years, and I feel like a cat in Leadville—the atmosphere is too rare for me."

"I've become accustomed to it," Jerry said—"I mean to society; but for a long time I was homesick for the camps. I still wish at times for a wild ride, for the swing in the shaft, for the roaring song of the men. And sometimes when I find myself in a polite drawing-room dance I wonder what would happen if I should break into a regular mining jig before the whole company."

"I came from Philadelphia to-night," said Ward, with an unreadable smile, "but I would travel a much greater distance to see you do that."

"It is not likely to happen. You see the influence of heredity. I was born here in the East, of Eastern parents, and it is quite natural, I sup-

pose, that I should relapse under the first favoring conditions and become tame again."

"It is too bad," assented Ward, affecting to feel depressed by the thought; "but are you really entirely tame?"

"Oh, no! At least my friends seem to regard me sometimes as not quite perfectly manageable."

He thought this was hopeful. "And I suppose," he added, "that is what my cousin meant just now when she spoke of you as delightfully original."

"Did that excite your curiosity?"

"No—my reverence."

Presently Ward was talking about his electric drills, his mining schemes and the chances of silver working in view of the Repeal Bill. "Of course," he remarked some minutes later, "we are keeping very quiet about the combine just now."

"And yet you are telling me all about it."

"Oh, well, you know what I mean; we are keeping it out of the papers."

"I see," said Jerry reflectively.

"And besides, you are a privileged person; you belong to the mining fraternity, and if I mis-

take not, your father will be interested in this thing."

"Aren't you trying to justify yourself for telling

me something that you shouldn't have told?"

"Well, I'm open to conviction as to whether my confidence has been misplaced."

They were both laughing at this when Fred Prentiss came hurrying up. "Miss Holbrook! I've been hunting for you everywhere. They're dancing, and this is my waltz."

Ward did not look as if he were at all grateful to Prentiss. As Jerry disappeared with the younger man he remembered that he had promised his cousin that he would ask Miss Olivia to dance.

The incident will explain the frame of mind in which Miss Geraldine Holbrook found herself on the following day. Unless she abandoned her commission from the Dynamo, and thus confessed defeat at the very threshold of her undertaking, she was obliged to confront a somewhat awkward situation with Mr. J. Sylvester Ward. In the little talk at Mrs. Dyckman's, Ward had told her everything, or very nearly everything, she needed to know for the purposes of her newspaper article. It struck her as whimsical that she should have been placed in possession of the wished for information in circumstances so peculiar. To go to Ward, confess her ambitions, and appeal to him from the professional standpoint for permission to make use of the information he had given to her, or so much as it might be proper to publish, seemed more awkward than the original undertaking. It would be confessing the whole scheme to the Dyck-

mans, as well as taking a comparative stranger into the secret.

Yet it was not impossible to take Ward into the secret. The matter was wholly one of business, and Ward, as a man of business, would respect an application made in that spirit. Looking at the matter practically, she thought it was a pity that she could not have made an appointment at the ball to meet him somewhere on the following day. That would have been no more novel than anything else about the affair.

If she could have done this she would have been saved the disappointment of going again to the hotel to find that Ward was not in. She now began to feel uncomfortable at the thought that the City Editor would have abandoned all thought of seeing her again. He would have decided that she had failed to meet the test. The thought was exceedingly unpleasant. In the afternoon she again was starting to go uptown when she met Mr. Ward at her own door.

He had missed her father at the office, and to lose no time had called to discuss a very important business matter. At least, this was his explanation. After hearing this, Jerry abruptly con-

fessed to him her whole enterprise. "I throw myself on the mercy of the court," she concluded.

"I understand," said Ward, evidently not at all embarrassed by the situation. "You want me to keep your secret, but you don't want to keep mine. You want to publish my secret to the world. Now, do you think that's quite fair?"

"Oh, but I don't want to publish *all* of yours —just *some* of it, you know."

"Will you let me off on the syndicate scheme and the compound drills?"

"If you will tell me *everything* else that's interesting, and let me make notes *right* away."

Jerry found paper and pencil and settled at the library table, Ward regarding her with a kind of quizzical seriousness as she bent herself with great enthusiasm to the taking of notes.

"Don't you want me to sharpen your pencil?" he asked, after she had begun. "You see you will have to read this afterward."

The point broke twice while he was performing this delicate service. "Of course," he said, "I always sharpen the reporter's pencil when I am being interviewed, and I don't wish to discriminate against you."

Jerry ventured one or two questions during the process.

"You had better wait," said Ward, "or I shall break this again; and you won't remember it all, anyway."

"I wonder," she said, "if you will remember all that *you* say, and stand by it, and not quarrel with the paper afterward because you don't like the looks of it in print?"

"But that would include quarreling with you, wouldn't it?"

"O, certainly! you would have to quarrel with me first."

"I'm not afraid of the paper, but I should be afraid to quarrel with you. You look like a winner," said Ward, watching her narrowly as she resumed her work.

"You see," Jerry said presently, after an industrious period of writing and questioning, "I can fill in the narrative with a good many facts about mining that I myself know."

"O, yes!" assented Ward, "that's the right way. All the reporters do that. I've had them supply so much that afterward I couldn't see where I came in."

"But there will be plenty of you in this," suggested Jerry, "The City Editor was right. He said he *knew* this would make a good story if I could get you to talk."

"Get me to talk! And you did get me to talk, didn't you?"

Jerry laughed over her notes. "I had no idea it was so easy. I believe I should like interviews—if I could get people to come here to the house like this."

"Probably a large number would be willing," suggested Ward, "if they——"

"Oh, dear!" cried Jerry, "I can't make out this word. What did you say was the name of those little jiggers on the side of the machine?"

"Eccentrics. Are you sure there are not some other words there that will bother you?"

"Yes." Jerry was examining the notes. "They are my first attempt, but I really think I can read them."

Just here there was a step in the hall, and Mr. Holbrook appeared in the doorway.

"Ah, Mr. Holbrook!" exclaimed Ward, "behold me in the act of being interviewed!" Then catching Jerry's frightened glance, he added:

"Your interesting daughter here has been kind enough to entertain me by listening to yarns about the mines. She is a sympathetic listener. It's a novelty to find a woman who knows so much about the subject."

"Yes," said Holbrook, unsuspiciously, "Jerry always did know mines better than her arithmetic."

Leaving the two men together Jerry hurried down-town to explain matters to her editor.

Her editor did not seem especially cordial at the outset ; but when she had explained that Ward had been out of town until late in the evening, and that this was why she had not returned on the same day as instructions and good journalism demanded, his interest appeared to revive. He found a seat for her at a table near his desk and asked her to write out her story at once.

It was then half-past three. There was considerable noise in the office, and a continual hum from the hustling streets below. The newsboys were shouting the afternoon "extras."

The first paragraph in her article occupied Jerry for just forty minutes. Fortunately, the

writing came a little easier after that. She grew somewhat accustomed to the noises, to the moving of feet, the jingling of electric bells, the fragments of conversation, the clicking of a typewriter that seemed to be playing in rivalry to the finer staccato of the telegraph instrument.

As the afternoon waned, Hamilton came over and turned the button of the electric lamp, remarking, tritely, that there was no extra charge for illumination. The mellow radiance of the lamp gave a special charm to the work, which now began to seem very professional. But it also gave a hint of approaching night and the dinner-hour at home.

When she had begun to wonder if it wasn't nearly midnight, the article was finished; that is to say, there was nothing more that she could do with it; and when the last page was written, and after looking it over, with many misgivings, she surrendered it to Hamilton, who evidently had been watching her. He asked her to wait while he looked it over, and she asked whether she might not sit near while he corrected it. And so she took a seat beside him, and saw him blot out, interline and otherwise

disfigure her pages with a blue pencil. It was worse than holding out one's hand for a surgical operation; and Hamilton never displayed a sign of any feeling in the matter, or any indication that there was anything unusual in the affair. Here and there he simply said, "We don't put it that way," or, "This is not exactly in the newspaper manner." When he had made poor Jerry's manuscript look like a dress-pattern supplement, had written a heading and sent the manuscript away by a boy, he helped Jerry with her wraps and found his own hat and coat.

"If you don't mind," he said, "I will see you to the car."

"Thank you," she returned, "but I hope you won't disturb yourself. It's very early in the evening, and it's not at all necessary."

"I am going up-town anyhow," he said, with something of both deference and insistence. "I hope you will give me the pleasure. I am through for the day."

He did not tell her that the Night Editor had relieved him over an hour before.

"Of course, by-and-by," he added, as they stopped before the elevator, "you probably will

scorn an escort, but you're not yet thoroughly initiated. And besides, I don't see how you can prevent the editor from walking out along with you if he wants to."

When Jerry sat alone that night and surveyed the progress of her adventure, the incidents of the afternoon began to seem more novel than they had seemed in the progress of their happening. Incidentally, she concluded that Hamilton was not a brute. There was something cool and decisive about him that made her wonder whether he might not know how to be disagreeable, but his courtesy had the charm of growing in quality as one thought about it.

Early the next morning Jerry seized the "Dynamo" and read her interview in that glow of interest with which the young writer fondles the first progeny of the pen. All the machinery had disappeared—especially the blue pencil-marks. From the erased and patched and seemingly muddled lines had emerged the smooth and authoritative print. And, after all, those blue pencil corrections had looked more frequent and violent than they really were. The story seemed to be much as she had written it.

And now that the thing was done, came the reckoning. There was no reason why she should prolong the secrecy, now that she had demonstrated that she could do something. She had wished to show that she could do that which she had done. Not that this was very much, but by doing that which she had done she expected to inspire her father's confidence in her ability to face the world. As it turned out, facing the world had not, in this particular instance, proved so very serious or difficult a matter. Everything had favored her. Yet she had faced all that the circumstances demanded, and had not asked that anything be made smooth.

When she handed the paper to her father she slipped her arm round him and said, "Dick, I've been running off again." It was the confession that she used to make when, as a child, she had gone farther from the camp than he had permitted. He looked at her and at the newspaper, and then he sat down, and she told him all about it.

"And did you think that affairs were so bad —so bad as to need this?" he asked her in a tone that betrayed resentment.

"No, Dick," she said, hoping to prevent him from becoming too serious. "I didn't think matters were so very bad—yet, perhaps ; and I guess that was more an excuse than a reason. You understand, Dick, that I had dreamed of doing something like this, of making myself independent—I mean of not being dependent," she hastened to add when she saw him wince. "Now don't let yourself misunderstand me, Dick. You know what I mean. I wanted to feel the exultation of conquering something myself, for myself ; and maybe, if I could, and had to, for you, too, Dick."

Holbrook looked at the girl with a pained smile. "And so my daughter is tired of being her father's helpmeet?"

"Hush, Dick! that's all wrong. I don't know what I shall do with you if you keep on being so perverse. I shall write an article about you, and call the attention of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Grown-up Daughters. And you haven't even read the article yet to see whether it's good or not."

"Ah, my dear Geraldine! I take all the pluck and all the talent for granted I'm afraid."

"And yet you don't want me to do anything with them."

"I suppose it was selfish of me to be content to have you make me happy with them all these years."

"Now look here, Dick," and Jerry took possession of his hands. "Don't you suppose I'm going to keep right on making you happy with them?"

He tried to laugh.

"And are you solemnly certain that you haven't a little pride about this—that you don't feel that it would be awkward to have your daughter earning wages? Now Dick, that isn't at all modern and proper. You didn't have any such notions out in Colorado. I haven't done this because I didn't like you, you conservative old reformed miner, but because I didn't like myself, because——"

"Geraldine, listen to me! If you had wished to take another sort of position——"

She interrupted him. "I know what you are going to say, Dick. You would like something stupidly settled and feminine, you know that, Dick. You think newspaper writing is a little

wild and Bohemian. You are afraid some one will call me a reporter."

"Geraldine, suppose I should say to you that I wished you to give this thing up."

"Then I should prove how wrong you were, father, by never writing another line."

He kissed her and added, "Well, I don't say it."

A few mornings later she watched him read her account of the progress of the North River Tunnel. At first Hamilton had suggested that she write the article as a woman—"A Woman's Adventures under the River," or something of that sort—but she begged off. "You're right," said Hamilton, "people are tired of the everlasting woman's view in the newspapers."

It amused and interested him to see how eager she was to escape the label of her sex in the work she did. "I'm proud of being a woman," she used to say, "but I don't wish to be either praised or pardoned for being one."

She enjoyed the privileges of her new position, which sometimes were somewhat picturesque. The keeper of the Central Park Zoo enjoyed introducing her to Juno, and watched with admira-

tion the girl's perfectly fearless friendliness toward the venerable beast. Old Juno, nearly half a century old, was one of the creatures at the Zoo who left no doubt of perfect contentment. When the keeper brought a loaf of bread, Jerry did as she was bid in feeding the beast, and when Juno opened her mighty maw, even exceeded her instructions, until the keeper said, "You needn't put the bread so *far* in."

If there was a story of suffering anywhere Jerry liked to look it up, and she found new phases of life to be alive with interest. The bootblacks and newsboys attracted her, and she used to speak to them, not from the benevolent altitude of ladies who talk about "my poor," but in a companionly way that grew naturally out of her real sympathy and enjoyment.

Interviewing people soon lost its terrors—for her; and, indeed, she was made welcome by the officials and great people who once had seemed so imposing, but who were very nice when you actually met them.

When she went to inquire about certain questions concerning the stability of the great Brooklyn Bridge, she met Superintendent Martin, the

Chief Engineer who supervised the great undertaking, the "brains" of the big bridge, who walked out to the Brooklyn tower to show her why no woman could get to the top of it, where she wanted to go.

"There is no reason," said Mr. Martin, "why this bridge should not last for a thousand years if it is properly taken care of."

"And you are doing that," suggested Jerry.

"Doing what, taking proper care of the bridge or living to be a thousand?"

"Well," returned Jerry, with her undaunted laugh, "you are doing one and deserving the privilege of the other."

She went to see Farmer Dunn, New York's official weather prophet, in his eyrie, then situated on the top of the Equitable Building, where you looked out toward the bay and Liberty, with Trinity Church and the steaming city in the foreground. The Farmer couldn't explain precisely why the weather was generally so obstinate, but he admitted that they had determined to try their luck with it in another much higher tower to the south, chiefly, however, because there was going to be—had already begun to

be—a new twenty-four-story building next door that would keep off some of the weather.

When Jerry had mastered the complicated

passages of the Grand Central Station, the worst difficulties associated with interviewing Mr. Depew were over. Mr. Depew is credited with having improved on Lord Byron's phrase by declaring that fame is being good to newspaper people; and it has yet to be said of him that he ever made the fact that one of these newspaper

people was a woman count against her. Certainly Jerry, awed as she had been by the prospect of calling upon the distinguished orator and railroad president, the genius of words and of affairs, never was more quickly made to feel at ease than in the swinging chair of that big private office, before this newest subject of her exceedingly unstudied interviewing method.

Mr. Depew has the faculty of making the newspaper interview seem almost reasonable, not merely to the interviewer, in whom the last vestige of any embarrassment at once disappears, but to the most critical of readers, who cannot but yield to the charm of that nice art of seeming to answer questions. Jerry was made to feel that the theme which she had broached was one in which Mr. Depew felt a lively interest, and her own interest was proportionately heightened. Her Depew interview was one of the things to which Hamilton chose to award the tribute of his never fulsome praise.

"But how did you come to know anything about railroads?" Mr. Depew asked Jerry. And Jerry had to remind Mr. Depew that she was not the person who was being interviewed.

Thus runs the story of Jerry's mild newspaper adventures, from which I must now turn for a moment to certain others.

II

TWO or three times during the winter Pink Loper had made brief visits to the Holbrook house. Kate never approved of him at all. She looked upon him with undisguised suspicion. One day, when she bestowed a particularly accusing glare, he turned to her and said: "What's the matter, Birdie? Ain't you pleased with me?"

"Me name is not Birdie, thank you, sorr."

"Waal, it ought to be Birdie," said Pink. "Yer look like Birdie. Y're the very picture of Birdie. What do y'. suppose is the reason they didn't name yer *Birdie?*"

"You're no gintleman," said Kate.

"That shows, Birdie, that yer can't see through my disguise. I'm a real gentleman, Birdie, but down where I work I have to wear this disguise t' keep from attractin' attention; an'

yer have no idea how that strain wears on my nerves. I'm almost a physical wreck."

"Why don't you cut your hair?"

"Birdie, did you ever hear o' Samson!"

"Naw, I didn't."

"Waal, Birdie, he was the strongest man on earth. Samson was a regular snorter for strength; break chains on 'is arm, throw up a four-hundred-pound cannon-ball, tear a pack of cards in half, bend railroad tracks as if they was

fence wire. And one day a woman says to 'im, 'Samson,' she says, 'why don't yer git yer hair cut?' An' he says, 'Because I don't want it cut,' he says; 'like it long best.' An' she says, 'but everybody is laughin' at yer,' she says. 'I don't care,' he says; 'I'm goin' to go on havin' it long.' An' then she hung around until he fell asleep, an' then she got a pair o' scissors an' she *shingled* 'im, an' when he woke up he was as weak as a cat—couldn't lift nothin' at all. An' you stand there, Birdie, an' ask me why I don't git my hair cut!"

Kate gave him a final stare. "I don't think you're right in your head."

"There yer go agin, Birdie," Pink said, with a sad look at her. "Can't yer see that you're hurtin' my feelin's? *I* know what y're goin' to do, Birdie; y're goin' to stand there till yer lull me to sleep, an' then y're goin' to git a pair o' scissors——"

But Kate fled; and Pink, following her to the door, came face to face with Jerry.

"I've been jollyin' the girl a little," he said to Jerry.

"That's very wrong, Pink."

"I know it; but I was doin' it to keep up my spirits. I felt awful rocky to-day."

"What's the trouble now?"

"Same thing. Mary's gettin' very wild. She's pickin' at me all the time. An' yer never saw that woman shoot so beautiful as she's shootin' now. I just admire her shootin'. What's that?"

Pink's quick ear had caught the sound of a voice at the door—a voice that filled him with terror. In another moment the Rose of the Rockies, in all her glory, was at the door, screaming, "Where is she?" and "Where's the huzzy?" with Kate clinging madly to her towering form; and Pink, failing in an attempt to divert the revolver, threw his strength against the extended arm, shouting: "Mary! Mary! Hold on! Don't shoot! Don't yer see it's Jerry? Yer remember Holbrook's daughter? It's only little Jerry! Only little Jerry, Mary!"

The Rose of the Rockies lowered a melodramatically large revolver with which she professionally split potatoes at the Mammoth Museum, and surveyed Jerry from head to foot.

"Yer see, Mary," Pink went on, the contortions under his moustache indicating his ex-

citement, "I only dropped in t' talk over old times with Miss Jerry—the old days at the Panther. Ain't she got to be quite a woman?

Isn't it wonderful! Put that gun away, Mary. It don't look right here. Put it away, Mary."

"Stop your noise, Pink!" retorted Mary; and Jerry, approaching the wild-eyed creature, who stood as if in puzzled indecision, remarked, with an excited inclination to laugh: "I guess you've forgotten about the little girl who used

to be over at the Panther Mine until five years ago."

"Oh, I ain't forgotten you," said the Rose of the Rockies, in a tone of voice that implied that she had still to be propitiated. "Didn't know you was 'round this part of the country. Might have looked you up. Didn't Pink tell you nothin' about me?"

"Oh, yes," assented Miss Jerry, with an impulse to shield the troubled party on the other side; "he has told me what a remarkable woman you are."

"Oh! you did, did you?" Mrs. Loper turned to her uneasy husband. "An' you never said a word to me about this. You're a sneak, Pink! You never was the size of a man anyhow. What was you afraid of? Afraid I wouldn't let you come, or afraid I'd come with you? Want me to have a string to you? *Oh,* what I have suffered with that man!"

"I'm sure, Mrs. Loper," interposed Jerry, "that Pink hasn't meant any harm. He has only been here a few times, and probably he has forgotten to mention it."

"Ha! ha!" The Rose of the Rockies looked

at Jerry with an expression of amused pity. "Say, a man could hypnotize you mighty easy, couldn't he? You must git some sense, or when you have the misfortune to git married the man'll *walk* over you—*walk over you!* You don't look like a fool, either."

"But appearances are deceiving," replied Jerry, with a look that Mary did not seem altogether able to fathom.

"But you hadn't ought to encourage him. You can see he's a man that needs constant mindin'. He's worn me just to a shadder of what I was."

"Now, see here, Mary," said Pink, "what do you mean by talking like that? I've been a good husband to you."

"Ha! ha!" Mary laughed again. The laugh was as musical as the creaking of an old hinge. "Jus' hear that man, will you!"

Jerry made a heroic effort to establish peace, and though the effort did not for a long time seem to result in any definite signs of an improved attitude between the visitors, the hostess was rewarded at last by seeing Mary in a comparatively tranquil mood, in which she even went so far as to talk about old times in the

West, and was induced to remark, before leaving, "You was a plucky thing not to git scared at the gun."

"But I was a little scared," Jerry confessed, "tied up a little inside."

"It was a bluff, hey! But that's right. Don't you let nobody give you no song and dance. You got a pretty smart tailor-made look about you anyhow. That hat hits me hard. Good-bye! Pink! What d'you do with that gun?

The incident afforded an amusing theme for discussion when Hamilton made one of his irregular, unprofessional visits that evening.

Jerry described the incident so entertainingly that Hamilton said he was induced to wish that he had been there. "You seem fated to encounter picturesque experiences," he said.

Hamilton had heard Jerry sing some of her mining-camp songs, accompanying herself on the guitar, and had heard her play some of the jig tunes the stockmen and miners liked. On this night she sang to him a chant with weird notes and comic words, in which the exaggeration of sentiment was very droll. It was a pleasure to see as well as to hear her play.

"You play," he said to her, "as if you not only liked guitars, but loved that particular guitar."

Jerry smiled without looking up. "I do love it," she said. "I feel as if all that I have thought while playing is somehow stowed away in its heart. That's sentimental, isn't it?"

"I should call it very appropriate sentiment," Hamilton said.

"I used to play a good deal at the camp. But

I wanted to dance too. And so sometimes I did both at the same time."

"That's what seems so odd to me," said Hamilton, "you don't look it at all."

"Look it? How should I look to fill the part properly?"

"I don't know exactly. You are what they call an American paradox, I guess."

Jerry laughed at something in his manner that was at once quizzical and flattering.

"I tell you, Miss Holbrook," Hamilton said, a little later, "you'll have to write up those things —Mining Camp Melodies—or something like that. The Sunday Editor would be tickled to death with it, and you could bring in illustrative musical passages."

She had caught the thread of another chant, and he listened with eloquent attention, paying a second tribute with his eyes. There is a fine flattery that does not use words.

Hamilton went home with his head full of the quaint music. He stirred the fire in his grate and found himself searching in the coals for a Western cabin lighted with oil lamps, and the picturesque group of men—he could see it all at

the sound of the chant ; and he appreciated anew the delightful magic of melody.

He had once known a girl who played the

guitar. She lived in a certain Pennsylvania village. She was a sweet girl and he had liked her considerably in a boyish way. Her repertory was exceedingly limited, but it was of the sort that made you willing to hear it over and over again. Her own favorite was the "Suwanee River." She took to playing duets with a young

man who had a banjo, and his favorite was the "Suwanee River" too. After that Hamilton didn't hear her play so often as he had theretofore.

A young man sees a good many girls in his time, naturally. There was another village girl who quite inevitably came to mind in any retrospect of this sort. She was one of those lively girls who speak first and think afterward, and who laugh at the mischief they do. Nothing disturbed her good nature. If an enemy smote her on one cheek, she turned the other—and there was a dimple in it. Somehow—no one could ever understand the process—she made a pale little professor fall in love with her. He had a very small salary, and she became quite serious after a while.

About the first really noticeable girl that Hamilton encountered in New York was the girl he met at an armory fair when he began reporting. She was the sort of girl that is always chosen for the lemonade-well by that natural selection with which ordinary human jealousy never seems to interfere. There was an almost unconscious grace in her method of hypnotizing the young

men into overlooking the weakness of the lemonade; and she had the effect of not being at all diluted herself. Last year she married a National Guard Adjutant, who was admittedly the prettiest man in the regiment, and made a great hit dressing to match his uniform.

Once when he was frivolous and had more time, Hamilton took part in amateur theatricals, and had to play lover to a girl who seemed to have a kind of pity for his want of theatrical courage. On the night of the play he used all of his powers, but when the affair was over she told him that he made love like a wooden Indian. She was a fine girl, though a trifle satirical and hard to impress, so that when she went on the stage he felt that admiration of her from a safe seat in the parquet was the most practical thing in her case.

Then there was the pretty girl he had known when he was in college, who was engaged to a freshman, sophomore, junior and senior at the same time. This girl had a marvelous faculty for putting her heart in pawn, and getting a good advance on it every time. She was still the particular beauty of that college town.

It was one of the traditions of the place that some student or students should be engaged to her each season. She rather expected it herself, and in the fitness of things it was always expected of her and of the college. And she seemed as young and pretty to every senior as when in his freshman days, he first acknowledged her charm.

It is thus that in youth faces fade out of our lives and new eyes look into ours. Familiar voices grow faint in memory, and the lips of new friends coax us to believe that life is all before. The names come back like a strain of last season's song. And the new music. . . .

What a fine instrument the guitar is when you come to think of it! How full of sentiment! Not so plunky as the banjo, and without the soulless chatter of the mandolin. And how becoming to a girl! Strange how "La Manola" lingers on the ear! And the little romanza that made you think of moonlight on a lake, or on a river that flowed by an ivy-grown castle, or something like that. The guitar gave to it just the right flavor of mystery and romance. . . .

Did the string break? No, it was only a coal tumbling from the fender. Odd how a man will

sit up late staring at a fire and almost going to sleep when it is after midnight. Odd how he will go on staring at the fire and pondering upon how much he knows of the world since that other girl in the Pennsylvania village used to play for him the "Suwanee River."

Odd how he will sit in the morning, with one shoe in his hand, trying to whistle the air she played before she played the romanza. Odd how he will catch it after a while, a little wrong, somehow, but near enough, and softly whistle it at his work all day.

Well, you know how those things go. Hamilton began to think that one of the pleasantest phases of life was to walk up-town with Miss Geraldine late on a spring afternoon; up vociferous Broadway, through Washington Square, and under the shadow of the stately marble arch to Fifth Avenue, where Fifth Avenue is quietest. During the whole spring the arch wore a vast apron, behind which men of the chisel were at work finishing the decorations of the graceful span.

"They call that the gateway between polite and profane New York," Hamilton said; "but I

like to think of it as a great magnet of public spirit drawing the city, north and south, together."

"I'm afraid," said Jerry, "that there really is no geography to speak of in New York's snobbery. But the arch is a beautiful and noble thing anyhow. We should have more of such."

"Yes, an arch built in that spirit is the best arch of triumph."

And then, it was very pleasant, when trying

conclusions with Mr. Holbrook in a game of checkers, to have Jerry sitting by with the guitar and improvising the strangest possible mysteries of rythm and melody, or perhaps humming a low tune to some fantastic accompaniment that suggested the barbaric twang of an Indian orchestra.

Holbrook played a stubborn game and a long one; and he took the liveliest delight—though one which only those who knew him well could see any sign of—in puzzling his opponent. Hamilton was no match for him at all; and besides, there are circumstances in which it is difficult to concentrate one's attention on a game.

So that it was a very natural thing that Hamilton should one day find himself in a confused state of feeling when he received a proposition to become the London correspondent of the Dynamo. This was the sort of position he had always thought he would be delighted to get hold of; but there comes to the most of us a time when we worry, not so much about the appointments of Paradise as about who is going to be there. Hamilton wished to decide the question of going to London or staying at home

without any sentiment whatever. But very soon it began to be quite clear to him that Miss Geraldine Holbrook occupied an extremely practical relation to the subject. And so he went to see her that night.

She seemed very much interested when he told her about it. "It's a splendid opportunity, isn't it?" she said, simply. "I should think that you would be delighted."

"Oh, I am," Hamilton admitted, "but I'm not so much delighted as I thought I should be. If I were I don't think I should have come to you so promptly."

"Now, what does he mean?" she said, looking at him in a certain quizzical way that she could command.

"I mean," said Hamilton, "that I had to come to you to see how delighted I was. You don't understand that, of course."

"How should I?" she returned. "I'm not a thought reader."

"Are you quite sure? That is a good deal for a woman to confess to a man. And you are one of those to whom I should have been most willing to ascribe the power."

"But you are very hard to read."

"Have you really tried, then?"

"Not deliberately. I was a little afraid of you at first—even when I was telling you that I was not afraid of anybody. That was funny, wasn't it? for you're not a bit dreadful."

"No," assented Hamilton, "I'm quite lamb-like when you come to know me. But you are getting away from the question, which is this: I want you to ask me *not* to go to London."

"Not to go?" she repeated. "That would be rather selfish, wouldn't it?"

"But I would like you to be just that selfish. Of course, if it didn't make any particular difference to you, I shouldn't wish you to ask me."

"You know better than that, you wicked editor," she said; "it would make a great deal of difference to me."

"There is one thing I do know," he went on, "and that is that I have been in love with you for a long time. I realize how much when I attempt to think of going to London or anywhere else away from you."

"I didn't think——" began Jerry.

"You didn't think that it was as bad as that.

Well, it is just so bad. I have stated the case without mitigation. Is it shocking?"

"I have never thought about that," she said, without the trace of lightness that crept into so much that she said. "You will think it strange. perhaps, but it is true. I have only been happy in the friendship."

"And you don't think that you can ask me not to go away?" he said, regarding her intently.

"I don't wish you to go away, but I couldn't honestly ask you to stay if the asking would mean——"

"You needn't say it," he interposed; "I know. But I want you to understand that I don't propose to give you up so easily as this." There was a whimsical seriousness in his manner that was free from any bitterness, if it also confessed the stress of feeling which he chose to mask in this way.

"Oh, don't give me up!" she cried, with a return of some of her lightness; and then, seeing in his face a suspicion that she was not quite serious, she quickly added: "I hope you will try to understand me; I hope you will take into ac-

count what a peculiar life I have led, how much in company with my father, and how greatly this life has tended to make me independent of thoughts that might have been uppermost in the minds of other women."

"I think you may depend upon me to think the best possible things of you."

They tried to speak of other things, and she brought him a queer little Japanese samisen she had picked up in a shop on Fourth Avenue; but a little constraint had crept into their talk. No companionly easiness of manner which Hamilton might force himself to assume could rescue the situation from a definite gloominess. There have been men who looked elegant in the pillory. Men have died artistically in the most unpromising situations; but no man ever occupied gracefully the position of having just been refused by a woman. It was like falling overboard into shallow water, in which one could neither sink nor swim.

When he was leaving she looked quietly into his face. "Do you think you will go to London?"

"I don't know," he replied, looking back into her eyes until she lowered them. And he was speaking the truth.

"But I wish you would promise me something," she said. "You may be too angry with me as—as my friend, to promise anything; if so,

you might promise it as the editor. It is this: I want you to let me know as soon as you decide to go to London—if you do."

"I promise," he said.

"At the very first moment."

"At the very first moment."

He wondered why she asked, and after he had

gone she wondered too. She only knew that she didn't wish him to go; or, at least, that she didn't wish this pleasant companionship which

they had established to be abruptly broken off.

She had told him the truth when she said that she had never thought of marriage. If she had ever thought of it at all it was to think that perhaps she was not suited to such an undertaking. She did not tell him that she had refused Ward two weeks before. If she had, his thoughts on

the matter might not have been tinged with the suspicion that comes with the shadow of another man.

Each of them had refused to take her "No." She wondered whether this was really a compliment. It seemed to her as if there must be something doubtful about that. Of the two, Hamilton had seemed to feel the more hurt, though his words had been the fewer. Ward had seemed, then and since, to enjoy a certain confidence of inducing her to a change of mind. He was a dexterous man. An obstacle only made him cooler. If he had given the slightest sign of any feeling that he was offering her much, it would have been easy to acquire a resentment toward him. No such suggestion appeared in his manner. His deference had all the art that a man of the world could throw into an effort to win something he wished for very much.

She appreciated the fact that Hamilton was hampered somewhat by the position he had occupied toward her. She was indebted to him, and his position was peculiarly delicate. It made her realize her high estimate of him to find that she did not doubt his ability to emerge from

the most delicate of situations without discredit.

From time to time Hamilton had heard rumors of Ward's connection with a big mining deal. The scheme evidently was to get control of the Long Creek and Panther Mines, and the Rock Ledge Mine to the north, and to turn them over to an English syndicate. Ward had secured Mr. Holbrook's good will in the matter by an agreement to square things with the people who had brought suit against the Panther Mine Company to restrain it from an alleged encroachment on their claim. One of the chief objects of Ward's winter campaign in New York was the capturing of the principal Rock Ledge owners, who were New Yorkers.

Late one afternoon, soon after Hamilton's disappointment, the young editor heard a significant rumor about the mining scheme, one that seemed to him particularly to concern Mr. Holbrook. An outline of the rumor appeared in an article from the financial writer of the Dynamo. Hamilton took a proof of the article in his pocket in the evening when he went to dinner. He made up his mind to give the benefit of the doubt to Holbrook by letting him look at the thing before

the paper went to press, and to offer to add any statements that Holbrook might choose to make by way of modification or denial.

When he reached the Holbrook house at eight, he found Ward there and Holbrook away at a meeting. Jerry promised that her father would be back very early. "Mr. Ward has been asking for him too," she said, after presenting Hamilton to the other visitor. "I'm so glad you two men didn't come to see me. It is so much more fun to steal the other fellow's company."

"Evidently we are both very willing accomplices," said Hamilton.

"We have been talking about the West," Jerry said to Hamilton, who begged her to go on with that theme. "We people here in the East," he said, "must learn a little more about the West, if we are to understand the current history the West is making."

"I'm afraid we mislead you," Ward remarked. "We have been talking about the wild and woolly part of Western life—the sort of thing which the Eastern man, who hasn't traveled, supposes to be typical everywhere beyond the Mississippi."

"Yes," said Hamilton, "the East and the West are extremely ignorant about each other."

Ward insisted that the East was particularly ignorant about the West. "There are many ways," he said, "in which the West has a chance to know what the East has been, and what it is; but unless the Eastern man has been in the West, and has been there long enough to look about him, he takes his notions of the West from the Western newspaper's funny column. Unless the East has its sense of humor in good working order, it is going to make big mistakes every time."

Jerry was sure that the East didn't understand the Western woman.

"As for that," said Ward, "I don't believe that the West itself is quite sure of understanding her. I had the pleasure of meeting a feminine candidate for political office last September, and she startled me."

"Short hair?" asked Hamilton.

"On the contrary."

"Pretty?"

"I should say so. Why, she was as pretty as the heroine of a newspaper scandal."

"Now, now!" cried Jerry, "We newspaper people will not like you to be so satirical."

"Oh, he doesn't understand the situation," Hamilton said, smiling. "He doesn't understand that the newspaper man extends to unseen womankind that benefit of the doubt which is the essence of gallantry. A reporter works on the presumption that every woman is pretty until she has been convicted on competent evidence of being plain."

"Clever theory," remarked Ward. "The woman I am speaking of didn't ask, and didn't need to ask, for the benefit of any doubt. She had no doubts, and she inspired none. It was beautiful."

"I don't think I should like a political woman," said Jerry.

Ward said their style always put him in mind of the woman in the street car who looks scornfully at the conductor and says, "Stop at the corner, please!"

"And yet we are always making mistakes about them," said Hamilton. "We all know enthusiastic suffragists who are the essence of womanliness, and we all have met the clinging

vine who has the eye of a doe and the tongue of a parrot."

"And the dreadful woman who goes into business," remarked Jerry. "It might be awkward to speak of her."

"Not at all," returned Hamilton. "She is always interesting, and sometimes useful."

"Speaking of women who go into business," Ward observed, "they are particularly formidable and awe-inspiring when they describe your personal appearance."

Jerry looked up from the guitar which Hamilton had fetched for her.

"In a distinguished instance," went on Ward, "when the account said 'Mr. Ward is a man of about thirty-five or thirty-six, with those slight touches of gray at the temples which so frequently mark the hustling American!' I experienced a peculiar nervousness. There was no telling what would come next. But I really fared excellently as the account advanced. The interviewer was charitable."

"Oh, she knew you were a Western man," laughed Jerry, "and probably packed a gun."

"After all," said Hamilton, "in order to read

a man rightly you must have him translated by a woman."

"Listen," Jerry murmured over the guitar, "and I shall translate you two men into music." And she played a queer thing that neither of them had ever heard before. It was a jumble of contradictions, and they each had in mind to ask for an explanation, when Holbrook came in.

"You people seem to be having a good time," he said.

Ward turned to Hamilton. "A newspaper man's business is always press-ing," he laughed; "I yield Mr. Holbrook to you," and the two men passed into the library, where Hamilton explained to Holbrook his errand, handed to him the paragraph to read, and watched the frown gather on his face.

"Of course you know, Hamilton," said Holbrook, with a tense sound in his voice, "that the publication of such a thing as this would be exceedingly distasteful to me and unfortunate for the scheme in which we are interested."

"But it is now a matter of news," began Hamilton.

"Excuse me, Hamilton," said Holbrook, lean-

ing forward in a vehement way, "it is a matter of private concern. What right has the public to be regaled with such matters to the detriment, yes, perhaps to the ruin, of individuals?"

Hamilton looked quietly at the older man. "Mr. Holbrook, matters are private so long as they are kept so. When this thing has been talked about on the street——"

"Such matters are private until the newspapers make them public," interrupted Holbrook, harshly.

Hamilton arose. "You do not seem to understand, Mr. Holbrook, that I came here in a spirit of friendliness, intercepting this piece of news with no thought but that of modifying so far as might be possible any injurious effect which you might fear would result from its natural publication."

"That's all right, Hamilton," don't misunderstand me. I'm not complaining of you, but of the institution you represent. I don't doubt but that you are entirely conscientious in your mistaken defence of it. But just wait until I call Ward. He's as much interested in this syndicate matter as I am."

Holbrook stepped to the door. "Jerry, excuse Mr. Ward for a moment."

The question was quickly outlined to Ward. "I can't say that I haven't expected this," he said quietly; "but Mr. Hamilton is in a position of authority—can't he suppress the paragraph, if only for forty-eight hours? That would hurt nobody. No great principle is at stake," he added, with an evident desire to cajole rather than to antagonize the editor.

"You are mistaken," said Hamilton, "there is the principle of good journalism; there is more than that; there is the principle of personal honesty."

"I don't see how it can be so bad as that," said Ward, moving his chair nearer to Hamilton. "Let us look the thing over."

"Gentlemen," said Hamilton, firmly, "this matter has leaked out. It has reached the ears of an accredited representative of our paper. I have no means of knowing that he is the only newspaper man who has heard it. For all I know to the contrary, every newspaper in New York has the same thing in type at this moment, and the press wires have sent it to every prominent

paper in the country. To keep it out of all those papers is impossible; to privately suppress it in my own would be dishonorable."

"Hamilton," said Holbrook, bitterly, "as I have said, I believe that you are conscientious, but your theory of the matter seems to me fantastic. It is the sophistry of a pernicious journalism. It is the kind of thing that has been said in defence of the most frightful violations of private right. It seems to me, Hamilton, that if you really wished to be friendly, you would give us the chance of safety by keeping this out of the paper."

"I can do no more to convince you," said Hamilton. "My coming here was purely personal, with a purely personal desire to offer a service. You ask me to suppress something which you do not deny to be true."

Holbrook moved impatiently. "Go ahead with it then! You might as well have done it in the first place without a word!" He checked himself. "Pardon me, Hamilton, you have been kind to my daughter——"

"He hasn't asked you to consider that, father." Jerry had been standing in the doorway. "Do

you think that two against one is a fair fight?"

The father turned as if to reproach her or to command silence.

"No use, Dick," she said. "I can't keep out of it. You see I am one of the wicked newspaper people myself, and I know how *I* should feel to have some one urge me to violate my professional honor. Mr. Hamilton came here to do you a favor, and you have attacked him."

"No, no!" remonstrated Holbrook; and Ward made a gesture of annoyance.

Hamilton turned to the door. "I am sorry," he said, "that I have not been able to do the service I had hoped. You are sure there is nothing you care to say?"

"If you don't mind, Mr. Hamilton," said Ward, "I shall walk a little way with you, and something may occur to me that we might wish to have said. I shall see you in the morning, Mr. Holbrook."

The two men left the house together, and at Ward's solicitation they dropped in at the Monastery, a little English chop-house, where, if you go late enough at night, you can get the best Welsh rabbit in New York.

The men took seats at a secluded table in a rear room. The pictures on the wall were mostly French and Italian. The only English picture in sight was the waiter. A good title for him would have been, "Hope Deferred." He was fat, but unhappy; and when a fat waiter is unhappy, his gloom is large and terrible.

When he had served the gentlemen, the waiter retired to a decent distance and assumed the appearance of communing with himself. In spite of his oblivious air he saw, as waiters will, all that passed between the men, and permitted to himself the mild entertainment of listening and observing.

The older man spoke softly, but it was possible to hear: "You have been told half of it, Mr. Hamilton, you may as well hear the rest." After a time the younger man could be heard saying, "Yes, it is a great enterprise." But his face was passive. "Decidedly," said the older man. "It is a big undertaking. I tell you, Hamilton, a young man with your talents could find a more profitable field in a thing of this kind than in the grinding work of journalism. You must have executive ability, or you wouldn't be

where you are, and your knowledge of men would be invaluable."

The waiter saw the older man draw a paper from his pocket and spread it out on the table between himself and his companion. He saw him draw out a smaller paper and place it over the first, talking quietly and earnestly as he did so. He saw the younger man's eyes fix themselves on the table in a peculiar stare.

Then he saw the younger man rise quickly, his face suddenly white. "I see," he said, in a hard tone. "Pardon me for giving you the trouble of getting at the point in such a circuitous way. I have almost made you say the thing in so many words. But the truth is that this time I didn't expect it. A newspaper man is apt to be an optimist, you see, and there are always people from whom he doesn't expect the vulgarity of an attempt to bribe."

"Mr. Hamilton——" began the other.

"Save yourself any further trouble, Mr. Ward," Hamilton went on, suppressing an inclination to lift his voice. "You are a shrewd man, but you have made a blunder. You have underestimated the profession and mistaken the individual.

Many really clever men have made the same mistake. A proposition of this kind should be carried to the business office."

Hamilton should have stopped here. But he was only a very young man after all. And so he went on with a strenuousness that owed much of its quality to an antecedent feeling of repugnance toward Ward: "You pass for an honest man, yes, even for a gentleman. But your code permits you to put your heel on a man's honor

with as little compunction as you would feel in kicking a stone into the gutter. I despise your type. I despise the thing you stand for. I despise every bacillus like you that helps to spread unscrupulousness among honest men."

"Don't rant," sneered Ward, at last. "Your melodramatic expressions of virtue will needlessly excite the waiter. You get such a holy enthusiasm out of this refusal that it would have been a pity to have omitted the opportunity."

"It won't pay you to be needlessly insulting."

Ward smiled. "Please don't," he said. "Don't threaten me. That would be comic."

"I have no intention of threatening you," returned Hamilton, the blood in his face, "but it galls me to think that you have secured the confidence of at least one honest man."

"Oh, Holbrook?" asked Ward, coolly. "Why, to tell you the truth, Hamilton, I thought your ill-feeling toward me might have had its origin in certain sentiments concerning another member of that household."

"Stop right there!" cried Hamilton, so audibly that the waiter started, and a man who had been dozing at a desk in the next room looked

up and rubbed his eyes. "I forbid you to speak of her."

"Forbid me?"

"Yes, forbid you; if you were not at heart a blackguard you never would have thought of dragging in such an allusion."

"Dear me!" was Ward's sneer.

Hamilton turned from him. As he passed out he stopped at the desk where the man had been dozing and tossed him some money. Ward called the waiter, relighted his cigar, folded up the papers on the table before him, and sat for some minutes staring at a little Italian picture on the wall opposite, of a man who had been wounded in a duel. Then he, too, reached for his hat, strode out of the place, hailed a cab, and in fifteen minutes was in the card room at the Continental Club.

"How are you, Winterhurst?" he said casually to a portly, gray-whiskered man half an hour later. "After I left you to-day it occurred to me that I might have let you have ten of my personal shares if you wanted them."

The gray-whiskered man looked at him narrowly. "I'm afraid I couldn't take them any-

how," he replied. "Been loading up a little on some other shares to-day."

Ward changed the subject, but presently Winterhurst remarked: "What is the best you could do on those ten shares?"

"Thirty thousand."

"Make it twenty-eight and we might talk the thing over."

Ward shook his head.

"Twenty-nine."

"Have your own way," said Ward, laughing; and Winterhurst took a sheet of club paper and wrote something on it in a precise hand.

"Is that all right?" he asked. Ward nodded and placed his swinging autograph at the bottom of the sheet.

"Now," Ward remarked to himself, "that little newspaper paragraph in the morning wont hurt so much."

Two hours later a galley of type in the Dynamo office containing the mining article was dropped by a careless foreman's assistant. About the same time came a rush of matter concerning a frightful spring storm that had been startling the coast. There was no chance to reset the mining

article, and the debated paragraph did not appear in the next morning's Dynamo. Neither did it appear elsewhere.

Ward had taken a needless precaution. It would have saved him from eight to ten thousand dollars to have known that he would have another twenty-four hours. He felt chagrined as he strode up Broadway with an angry glance across the square toward the Dynamo office. He had just muttered an oath to a boy who had brushed against him, when he saw Jerry crossing City Hall Square.

He caught up with her, and for the moment forgot some of his discomfort.

"Where are you going, my pretty maid?"

"To see the editor, sir, she said."

"May I go with you—to the door?" asked Ward. "I shouldn't dare to go further. The editor and I are out."

"How shocking!" she said, as if doubting his entire seriousness.

"Yes, I'm afraid he doesn't love me. May I wait for you?"

"If you don't get tired doing so foolish a thing."

Hamilton was in a mood that made Jerry think of the time when she had been a little afraid of him. "It was very good of you to stand up for me last night," he said, trying to make light of the incident. "I hope that this day's delay may prevent the embarrassment your father feared."

"And I hope," she added, "that you have not taken father too personally in this matter."

"I have tried not to."

"If you want to prove that," said Jerry, "if you want to prove that you have forgiven him, and that you can agree to disagree, I want you to come and see us to-night."

"To-night?" repeated Hamilton. "I don't know——"

"There, don't pretend that you have something that will keep you away."

"Unless something happens, I shall come then. By the way, I have a curious letter for you here." He searched among the papers on his desk. "Your story about unfortunate women has interested some one particularly."

It was a strange letter, addressed, "To the writer of 'The Pressure of Despair.'" It was scrawled in a muddy ink, and said: "Will the

writer of 'The Pressure of Despair' please call at 39 Cherry Street, third floor, front?"

"The person who wrote that—and evidently

it is a woman," said Hamilton, when he had read the letter and handed it back to Jerry, "was either intoxicated or in a very feeble physical condition—perhaps both."

"It must be somebody in distress—great distress," said Jerry. "No one could choose that article as a motive for writing who was not *feel-*

ing the pressure of despair. I must go and find her."

Hamilton again read the address. "That's a queer locality. Perhaps you had better let one of the boys go around and look the matter up."

"I should like very much to go myself," she said, studying the tremulous lines with increasing interest. "It can't be wrong for a woman to go to a woman."

"Perhaps not. But there are places where a woman——I see you are getting ready to say that you don't care."

"Is Cherry Street so very bad?"

"It is a trifle musty."

Hamilton glanced at his watch. "If you could wait until later in the afternoon, or this evening, I should like to go with you."

"It is broad daylight," she insisted, "and, Mr. Editor, *please* let me go alone."

"Well, it's your letter," laughed Hamilton, "and I suppose, if you wish to be so rash——"

She went away, with the letter in her hand; and after she had gone he regretted that he had not refused to let her go alone. He thought for a moment of following her, and strode to a win-

dow that overlooked the street. He saw her on the walk below. He also saw the figure of a man at the corner. It was Ward. He saw her

join him. They spoke together and walked away.

Then Hamilton sat down at his desk again and wrote two telegrams. One was to the proprietor of the paper, who was in Washington, saying that he had decided to accept the London commission. The other was to Jerry, saying

that he would be detained at the office during the evening, making arrangements to go to London.

Later in the afternoon a letter came from Holbrook, thanking him for keeping the matter out of the paper. "I was sure," said Holbrook, "that your better judgment would prompt you to do as you have done."

In his answering letter Hamilton frankly stated the reason for the omission of the paragraph. "I am sorry," he said, "that I cannot seem to merit your good opinion."

In the street below Ward had been studying the army of newsboys that swarmed in the narrow down-town streets. It would be truer, perhaps, to say that he was staring into the mass with thoughts on another matter.

When Jerry reappeared she told him of the strange letter, and added, "You can't go with me."

"But what will you do if I simply do go?" he asked.

"But you mustn't," she replied. "I have already refused an escort. Good bye." She turned away, but he caught up with her. "Let me

walk part of the way with you, and I will be very good and go just when you tell me."

When they reached Cherry Street he turned to

her with a movement of uncertainty. "This is a dreadful place."

"Doesn't it make you pity them?" She was searching for the number. "There, you must go now."

"Can't I wait at the door for you?"

"No; that would make me nervous. A

woman is safer here than in some less squalid parts of the city."

He watched her as she entered the house. At the corner he turned and paced the street, peering into Gotham Court and other famous alleys in this region of decayed New York.

The house that Jerry entered was dark and was pervaded by a disagreeable odor. The third floor seemed particularly gloomy and unpleasant. In response to a knock at a partly opened door in front, a faint voice said, "Come in!"

It was a surprise to find the room so clean. In a small bed lay a white-faced woman who, as she turned and saw the visitor, and heard her greeting, muttered, listlessly, "Are you from the Mercy?"

"No," replied Jerry, "I'm from the Dynamo office. I received this letter——"

"Oh!" cried the woman, starting up in the bed, "I supposed it was a man."

In a moment Jerry asked whether there was anything she could do to help her.

The woman shook her head. "I'm pretty near through with help now." She looked intently at her visitor. "So *you* wrote that. I

thought it was a man. It struck me so that I thought I would like to see him—to see him—and tell him——"

"Won't I do?"

"I don't know. . . . Are you married?"

"No," Jerry answered; "Are you?"

"I was married," said the woman, looking straight before her. "I was married when I was very young, younger than you are. We ran away, because his folks were rich and wouldn't have it." . . . Presently she went on: "Then they sent him away, and he let them send him. . . . And I never saw him again. After that his father came to me with money, and I threw it at him—in his face—and told him to let me alone."

"And you never saw your husband again?"

"No. After a while I got to thinking that maybe it was true that marrying me would spoil his life. You see he was a very fine young fellow. . . . And I suppose they forced him to go away. . . . And then one day I had word sent to him that I was dead. . . . I thought that it might give him more of a chance. . . . And I was as good as dead."

Jerry could find no word to say, but she took the woman's thin hand. "It was too bad, wasn't it," she said after a while, with a feeling

that her words were empty, "that you had to suffer all these years alone.

"Yes, I used to think so. That is the way of things in this world. But I saved him. Oh, yes! he has become a great man now!"

The woman fumbled under her pillow for a pocketbook. Jerry helped her to find it, and

the stricken hands brought out a crumpled clipping from a newspaper, which the woman feebly unfolded to its full length. "See! he has made a great name, it seems."

Jerry looked at the clipping and her fingers trembled. It was her interview with Ward.

"Things are very uneven, ain't they?" said the woman, peering again at the girl. "What makes you so nervous?"

Jerry lifted her head. "You must have loved him a great deal."

"I did; and that made it awful rough at the beginning. But after I got discouraged and reckless I tried not to think of him any more."

It was an old, sad story. It was the story which always might bear the same title: "The Forgotten Woman." Jerry listened while the weak voice told it, watching the dark eyes dilate, and the cheeks flush with fever. She listened in a kind of stupor under which the faltering story as it came was blurred in a rush of recollection. Her gaze fell past the figure in the bed, and the voice took on a new sound as of something at once unreal and fatalistic. The murky depths of life opened in an imminent and personal way.

In her later thoughts of that moment she even recalled a consciousness that there was something tragic in her own quiet. For chance had touched her with the very breath of this disaster.

"And then," said the woman at last, "I got to thinking that I would like to send some word to him before I died. I didn't know exactly what I wanted to say; and sometimes I didn't know whether I wanted to send that word because I loved him or because I hated him. But I want to send it. I made up my mind to that. I want him to know what I have suffered. . . . After I am dead I want him to know. . . . You understand?"

"Yes," said Jerry, brokenly, and vaguely wondering what part there might yet remain for her to play.

"And when I thought it was a man who wrote that piece in the paper, I thought *he* would understand, and that he might go to him. . . . You see it was a foolish thing to do, wasn't it? But you are a woman. How could *you* know?" . . .

There was a knock at the door. "Come in!" called the woman. "It's Mrs. Garry."

But it was another.

Jerry felt a pang at the sight of Ward standing in the door. Growing impatient and suspicious he had mounted the stairs, determined to find the whereabouts of the girl.

At the sight of the bed he stood irresolute and as if to turn away with some apology, when his eyes rested definitely on the face of the woman. Something in the face brought into his own a look of startled perplexity and horror. The woman, lifting herself painfully, stared, trembling, at the new comer, her lips moving without sound, until she was seized by a convulsive excitement that voiced itself in a pitiful scream.

"Jim!"

She fell back upon the pillow, her wasted fingers clutching the coverlet in an effort to turn once again to the door, and as if still in doubt as to the reality of that which she had seen.

Ward faltered into the room, his eyes still on the woman's face, which in the gray light of the room could be seen working uncontrollably. For a moment he turned to Jerry as if to speak, and made an awkward gesture that halted at some new sense of the agony on the pillow.

Jerry had turned away, and Ward somehow reached the woman's side and caught one of her hands.

At the door Jerry stopped for an instant, and saw him kneeling there beside the poor bed, stupefied, his white face resting in his hand. But the face of the woman was whiter than his. It was under the white shadow of death. . . .

III

RICHARD HOLBROOK had telegraphed to his daughter that afternoon, saying that he would not be home to dinner; but circumstances changed his plans, and less than an hour after sending the telegram, he reached home. Jerry was not there. The telegraph envelope in the hall was a reminder of the new crisis in his affairs. He absently read his daughter's name on the envelope, and as he tore the message into fragments, he caught sight of Hamilton's letter on the table. There was no longer any annoyance in the subject of their talk. Holbrook had discovered some serious streaks of trickery in Ward's scheme, and had withdrawn entirely from the combination. The history of Panther Mine and the history of Richard Holbrook were closely tied up together, and thus far that history was without a stain.

Jerry came in with Mrs. Remsen-Holt, who had some exciting news about a glorious spring run of the new Bicycle Club, of which she was the President.

At the door Jerry had taken a telegraph envelope from a boy. "I see, father," she said, trying to be jocose in the midst of the gloom that the afternoon's tragedy had thrown over her spirits, "I see that you are not coming home to dinner to-day."

"Oh," he said, "I came home after all. But where did you get that?"

"From the boy at the door."

"But I tore up my telegram myself." He looked at the floor. "This is strange. I could swear it was addressed to you."

They gathered up the pieces, and laboriously patched them together. Jerry was the first to trace the name "Hamilton." Then they learned that he was not coming.

"Old story," volunteered Mrs. Holt, cynically, from the mirror in the next room. "Detained by business."

The vital word was last to appear. It was the word "London."

Jerry read it with a sensation that was new in her life.

"Well," called Mrs. Holt, "I can see there is no use trying to talk bicycle to you to-day. But promise that you will come and see me to-morrow afternoon."

Jerry promised. She wanted to be alone. And she felt that she never had been so completely alone in her life before. She had no suspicion of the immediate motive of Hamilton's message, and its abruptness startled her. She was startled, not only because the message was so definite and final, but startled to find how much the certainty that Hamilton was going away affected her feelings.

The situation was as new to her as the whole experience of the winter and spring. This sensation of loss was one which she had never fancied as coming to her in just this way. As she had told Hamilton, her life had drawn her very close to her father. In those free, airy days of her girlhood, she sometimes sat in thought of the future, but she had never dreamed of that future as being more than another phase of the present. How new and different it might be, how the

wand of the master magician might change the whole course of things, had never appeared in her reveries.

When she had looked up at the young lieutenant who, one Summer, used to interest himself in wondering what sort of a girl she would be in other surroundings, she regarded his thin, brown face as very handsome, and had gone so far as to think several distinct thoughts about heroes in general ; but that Western air somehow drove this form of sentiment entirely out of her head.

No, there was nothing in the experience of those formative years of her life to make her think of that lover who should come and ask her father to stand aside ; ask her to separate from the companion of those happy, adventurous years of life in mountain camp and prairie ranch. To be sure, she was very young then ; but a mountain is a mountain, and a barrier built by the affections is hard to break.

Yet Hamilton was going away, and going away very soon. This was the hard fact. She could not conceal the change that had come over her, even when her father came home the next

noon with news of the failure of Ward's scheme and the sale of the Panther Mine under the most favorable conditions; she could not conceal it

later in the afternoon when Mrs. Remsen-Holt, in her obstinately absurd bicycle costume, wanted to know whether the editor had sailed yet. "But I shouldn't tease you, Jerry," she added, with one of her audacious laughs, "for I really think you are as droopy to-day as I was before I had any clubs."

The afternoon was drawing to a close in Mrs. Holt's garden.

"Why should I be out of temper," Jerry protested, "with father's good fortune after a winter of worry? And then you and your bicycle are *so* amusing. But if there isn't Pink!"

"Pink?" queried Mrs. Holt.

A figure had paused for a moment at the gate. Then it strolled up the gravel path with a rolling movement that was not to be mistaken.

It certainly was Pink, shorn of his long locks and minus his buckskin and leather. "Surprised, ain't yer?" he demanded. "Well, it's all settled. Mary's goin' on the stage—the real stage—no more dime museums, and I'm a-goin' to be her business manager."

"What is she going to play, Pink?" Jerry asked.

"She says, first-class parts—*and no gun.* She's goin' to start in with 'Romeo and Juliet.' She was tellin' me she was goin' to do 'Juliet' herself. I told her I thought she could do better with 'Romeo,' but y' know how cussed set that woman is."

"It never rains but it pours!" cried Mrs. Holt,

glancing toward the gate of the garden. "There's your editor."

Hamilton approached with an inexplicable look

in his face.

"I sent you a very brusque message last night," he said, before Jerry could speak. "It was ridiculous."

"Are you not going to London?" She asked this in a tone that left him wholly in the dark as to her knowledge and feelings.

"I have sent my acceptance; but the truth is, I made a blunder yesterday, the most absurd blunder I ever made, and I'm going to humiliate myself by confessing that I saw you meet Ward, and misunderstood you."

Jerry was silent. He went on with a warmth that, for him, amounted to impetuosity:

"I can't say anything worse about myself than that. Afterward—this morning—I heard about that affair in the Cherry Street tenement, and I made up my mind to find you this afternoon. I could see, when I came to think it over, that I had been a suspicious fool; but I ask you to remember——"

"To remember that you are a man," said Jerry.

"If you like," returned Hamilton, ignoring the thrust, "yet not only a man who, because he was a man, could indulge a foolish suspicion, but a man who had reasons to be deeply, profoundly interested in the person of whom he was thinking, and who on that account, if on no other, was—was not entirely accountable for his actions."

They walked back to the Holbrook house in West Tenth Street talking in this vein. Hamil-

ton followed Jerry to the library window. "Take off your hat and stay a while," he said, with an effort to speak lightly.

He took the hat from her. "What a wonderful thing a woman's hat is! Somehow it seems to symbolize the marvelous complexity of her own personality."

"I suppose,' said Jerry, "that you have some parallel symbolism for the simplicity of a man's hat."

She got up, and he turned quickly to her, grasping her arms and looking straight into her baffling blue eyes.

"See here," he said, defiantly, "I want you to sit down a moment and let me talk to you seriously."

"Must it be serious? Everything has been so serious lately that it would be a relief to have——"

"But I must be serious, you understand—just a little."

"You seem to be determined," she said, from the depths of the chair.

"I am! I told you once that I shouldn't easily

give you up. I meant just what I said. I have also said that I shall go to London. I have said that I shall go very soon—within a few weeks. Now, this chair is very artistic, but how do you expect a man to propose to you in such furniture?"

"I don't expect it."

He caught her before she could get away, holding her so closely that her eyes were very near his own. "Right here, and now, Jerry Hol-

brook: Do I go to London or do I stay at home?"

"You go to London."

"You say that finally?"

"Yes, and I'm going with you!"

He looked as if he didn't believe her. She had staggered him so.

"Jerry! Do you mean that I may just put off

that London journey for a while and that we may——"

"No; you needn't put it off unless you want

to. I *believe* in short engagements. And then, you know, father—there he is in the garden now—father needs a long rest, and I should like to ask him to join us in London. And he has told me, you quiet fellow, that it was *you* who sent the timely word that made this morning's sale of the Panther Mine."

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